linking project contending that any transfer of water from the Ganges and the Brahmaputra and their tributaries would cause irreparable and permanent damage to Bangladesh. Further, that massive intervention with the natural regime of the major international river system would remove the assured basis of development planning in the water and related sectors in Bangladesh and would create serious uncertainty. In the view of Bangladesh, the proposed project would contravene the recognized principles of international law and the letter and spirit of existing agreements between Bangladesh and India.

2. The Task Force on Inter-linking of rivers as constituted by Government of India in December, 2002 is required to consider the international dimensions that are involved in the project and also to prepare guidelines for formulation of detailed project reports of inter-linking proposals. The Government will take further action after the recommendations of the Task Force are received and while implementing the project the existing international treaties and laws relating to sharing of water of international rivers would be taken into consideration. The Project is only at a preliminary stage.

Irrigation schemes under North East Council (NEC)

*50. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of irrigation schemes included by NEC works planned for Tripura;

(b) the details of the irrigation schemes to be undertaken by NEC in other States; and

(c) if there is no scheme for irrigation in the North-Eastern States under NEC, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Nil.

(b) and (c) NEC takes up regional schemes which are beneficial to more than one State. 2 Projects, *viz.* Regional Jiri Irrigation Project in Manipur and Dzuza Irrigation Project in Nagaland, are proposed to be taken up during the Tenth Plan.

The Jiri Irrigation Project is in Manipur. It proposes to harness the river Jiri at Jiribam. The Project will benefit Manipur and Assam. The Gross Command Area is 7570 hectares. The Project is estimated to cost Rs. 6652.32 Lakh and is targeted to be completed by 2007-08.

The Dzuza Irrigation Project is in Nagaland. It proposes to harness the Dzuza river by construction of a barrage over the river. It will benefit Nagaland and Assam with a canal 21.51 km long for irrigation. The Gross Command Area is 9540 hectares. The DPR is under preparation by the Central Water Commission.

Insurance scheme for Indians going abroad

*51. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether any Insurance Scheme is proposed to be introduced for Indians who go abroad including Gulf countries for work;

(b) if so, the details including purpose, amount to be paid and the amount expected to be collected during the year 2003-04, State-wise;

(c) whether fees are collected during emigration clearance for benefits, evacuation of workers from their respective countries/work place during emergency situation;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the amount of above fund acquired as on date, State-wise, category-wise; and

(e) whether Government propose to cancel the fee in the light of the above Insurance Scheme?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. An insurance scheme for Indian workers going abroad for employment, *viz.*, "the Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana, 2003" has been notified on 13.11.2003. This insurance scheme will be effective from 25.12.2003 under which all emigrants with Emigration Check Required (ECR) endorsement on their passports will be required to take an insurance policy from any Insurance Company operating in India and duly registered with the Insurance Regulatory Development Authority while applying for emigration clearance under the provisions of the Emigration Act, 1983. The purpose is to provide for contingencies like